

BOUDDHANATH

A WORLD HERITAGE SITE



Published by
Government of Nepal
Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation
Bouddhanath Area Development Committee

(Infront of Bouddhanath Main Gate)

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Introduction

Bouddhanath Stupa, situated about five kilometer north east of the city centre of Kathmandu is the biggest stupa in Nepal in terms of height and expansion. The stupa is known as Khasti Chaitya, Khasau Chaitya and Khasa Chaitya. The Tibetan name of the stupa is JYARUNG KHASYOR.

Historical Background

Up till now, authentic and evidential source has not been yet found about when and who had laid down the foundation stone of Bouddhanath Stupa. In an ancient time of Tathagata Kasyap's (Holi Sung) period there was a poor girl Jyajima in Magat village of Nepal. The girl Jyajima gave birth four sons by four different persons. With the help of her four sons she collected too much wealth for the doing some marvellous things on this hollyland.

Mother Jyajima wanted to build a Stupa then she went to the recent King with respect for the permission. After hearing her request the King grant a piece of land to build the stupa. When mother Jyajima got the land then she started to build the stupa with the help of her four sons. Mother Jyajima died after four years during under construction of the stupa. Before her death, she ordered her four sons that "Four of you should complete this Stupa." During her death the stupa was erected up to the bumba level. After her death, her four sons had completed above the bumba level. In this way the construction of this holly stupa was completed.

Sylvan levy, the French orientalist as well as Gopal Raj Vansvali (a chronical started to write from 14th century onwards) both have written it's story slightly in different way. In brief, Man Dev who ruled Nepal valley in fifth century (464 - 505 A.D.) due to ignorance killed his father because of this heinous



(God Majnyazima)

crime he wailed and cried and went to Vajrayogini (a goddess of Sankhu). He did a great penance in Gumbihar where Vajrayogni resides. Due to his devotion, then sprang out a great stupa and established the same there.

Old Field another orientalist has written that a Lama from Tibet had died on his pilgrimage to Nepal and the stupa was erected with his relics and named it as Khasa Chaitya after his name. Still there is another story about the construction, which caused a great scarcity of water. So the morning dew (Khasu) was collected to build the stupa during the scarcity of water. Therefore local people especially Newar called it Khasti Chaitya. Gopal Raj Vansavali, a chronical credits Shiva Dev (King of Nepal valley) ruled for 41 years and erected the stupa Khasa Chaitya Mahakutum. Perhaps with this evidence, Mary Slusser also writes in her book

Mandal that Man Deva erected the stupa of Bouddhanath and Shiva Deva renovated it. Some Buddhist text mentioned that it took two thousand five hundred and fifty five days to complete the construction of the stupa.

The Nepalese, Tibetan and Tamang people have made equal contribution to develop the site as the Mahayana Buddhist Center of culture and education. It is also mentioned that King Pratap Malla of Kantipur (Kathmandu) also has renovated this stupa. Lama Toden Syaskya of Tibet had renovated the stupa about a century ago and covered the Trayodesabhumi (Thirteen Concentric Squares) with gold gilded copper plats and erected a small stupa to the east of main stupa. The stupa could survive from the great earthquake of 1934.

Art, Culture and Religious Aspects

The stupa stands over three-tiered platform raised over the crossed rectangles in order to bring out the Yantra from. It is really beautiful and grand in architecture, as in stupa architecture. This stupa also has got Vairochana at the centre followed by Achhyobhya, Padma Sambhava, Amitabh and Padma Amoghasiddhi in east, west, south and north directions respectively. Similarly, there are one hundred and eight small niches all-around the stupa accommotation, the icons of the Buddhas, Bodhisatvas and other female deities along with conjoint figures in erotic poses. Like wise, at the bottom level, it is surrounded with three praying wheels embossed with the famous mantra OM MANI PADME HUM fixed in more than hundred and fourty niches.

Bouddhanath is one of the most sacred places of the Buddhists. For the Tivetan Buddhists, it is even more sacred and therefore more crowded by the Tibetan Lamas than other Buddhist sites.

During Losar festival many Tibetans visit the place for pilgrimage. Entire stupa and its surrounding is decorated and lit during this festival. This is the New Year's Day festival of Tibetans and falls between the second half of January and first half of February each year. The youngsters are blessed by the elders during this festival. Another important event in Bouddhanath is the Twelve-Year Festival organised once every twelve-year. It is believed that it took twelve years to complete the stupa and this festival is organized to commemorate that event, and thus organized after every twelve years. There is a tradition of taking the chariot of Mhyazima round the Bouddha area with the religious procession of Full Moon Day of Mahga (Jan-Feb) each year. In the same way on the Buddha Jayanti (On Full Moon Day of May-June) day also the procession takes place but this time with the icons of Lord Buddha on a chariot. On the Full Moon day of Janai Purnima (Aug-Sep) the stupa is decorated with flags and lit on the night. It is a customary tradition to lit the immortal lamps inside the Bouddha Ghyang. The lamp should not be extinguished. In case, if it is extinguished it should be lit with another lamp brought either from old monastery of Swayambhunath or from Bajrayogini temple in Sankhu. The tradition is called "Mharme Lhakhang" in Tibetan language.

Listing in the World Monument List

UNESCO World Heritage Committee Convened in Cairo in 1979 accepted and approved the proposal of Nepal and enlisted Bouddhanath stupa in the world heritage list and it has become the property of world heritage. Now which enhanced the importance of the area.

The Bouddhanath Area Development Committee

Under the development committee Act 2013, Rule 3 His Majesty's Government of Nepal has formed the Bouddhanath Area Development Committee 2053 to develop the area of this ancient heritage with following objectives:

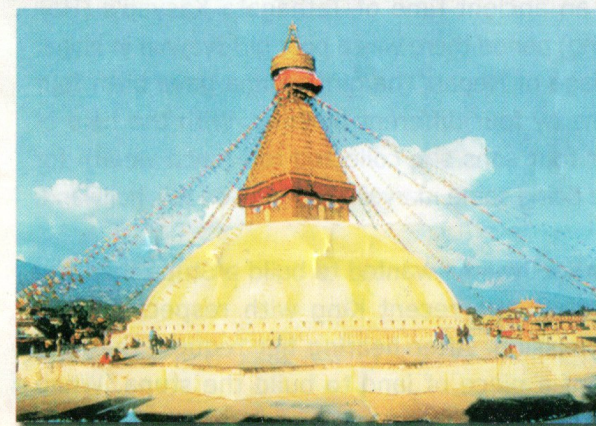
1. To initiate inquiry, investigation, search & exploration about the historical, religious, cultural (Archives) importance of Bouddhanath stupa area.
2. To develop programme and plans on Bouddhanath development area.
3. To coordinate, cooperate and join hands with GOs, NGOs, national/international agencies, UN & Individuals to develop, Improve & broaden Bouddhanath Development Area.
4. To Identify & approve programmes with regard to the tourism development.
5. To recognized prominent places and archives of the Bouddhanath Area and thereby specify/lite minimum rules/guidelines to be followed by every single visitors.
6. To safeguard natural heritage and environment of Bouddhanath Development Area.
7. To develop standard building/constitution/ guidelines for all kinds of construction around the Bouddhanath Area.
8. To approve and implement religious programme & plans on Buddhism.
9. To declare area to any place which holds historical/ cultural religious importance.
10. To coordinate with all GOs/NGOs, COs working in the Bouddhanath Development Area (BDA).
11. To organize seminar, meeting, conference, exhibition etc. at the national/regional international level to communicate, circulate, propagate & publicize the historical, religious & architectural importance of the stupa.

The development committee request every visitor to suggest the best way for the development of this area.

Thank you.

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